

Titus

[Part 1]

Although Titus is not mentioned in Acts, Titus was one of Paul's companions in whom Paul placed a considerable amount of trust.

Titus is mentioned first at the time of the Gentile controversy when he accompanied Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem. [**Galatians 2:1, 3**]

Titus probably accompanied Paul on his subsequent journeys, but no definite information of his work is available until the time of the Corinthians Church crisis.

Titus had evidently been acting as Paul's representative in the church at Corinth, during the year previous to the writing of the second letter to the Church at Corinth by Paul.

Titus had the special commission to organise the collection scheme there. [**2 Corinthians 8:16** see context]

Titus was given a more delicate task of smoothing over the tense situation which had arisen between Paul and the Corinthians.

This was a task that clearly demanded a man of great tact and force of character.

Titus appears to have a stronger personality than Timothy whom Paul was using in Corinth [compare **1 Corinthians 16:10** and **2 Corinthians 7:15**] and possessed ability as an administrator.

Titus eventually rejoined Paul in Macedonia [**2 Corinthians 7:6**] with good news [see context] and as a result 2 Corinthians was written and was willingly carried to Corinth by Titus [**2 Corinthians 8:16**] who had a particular affection and serious concern for the Corinthians.

From the letter that Paul wrote to Titus we may surmise that Titus accompanied Paul to Crete then left him to consolidate the Church in Crete.

With the previous training that Titus had we can see he was well suited to the task that Paul gave him.

There was facing Titus a strong pagan influence on this small island because Crete most likely was a training centre for Roman soldiers.

Therefore the Christian Church in Crete needed strong leadership.

Tradition represents Titus as having died peacefully in Crete at an advanced age.

Titus 1:1-3 [NIV] *“Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ for the faith of God's elect and the knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness, a faith and knowledge resting on the hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time, and at his appointed season he brought his word to light through the preaching entrusted to me by the command of God our Saviour,”*

In this short passage Paul gives us insight into his reason for living.

Paul calls himself a servant of God. The Greek word translated “servant” is “*dōulōs*” meaning bond slave, a person who is totally committed to obeying his Master, Jesus Christ.

This obedience led Paul to spending his life telling other people about Jesus Christ.

We all need to ask the question, 'Is this our purpose in life, do we in any way we can by example or words tell other people about their Saviour?'

Paul also calls himself an "apostle", Greek word "apōstōlōs" meaning delegate, ambassador, messenger as one sent out with a message.

Although Paul was not among the 12 that Jesus Christ chose, Paul was specially called to bring the Good News to the Gentiles. [Acts 9:1-16]

God's elect refers to those whom God is calling at this time to have their chance for salvation.

Only when the truth is revealed to us, the reason why human beings exist [Genesis 1:26-27] that leads us to the Only One who is good, God. [Luke 18:19]

Faith in the truth, God's Word, the Christian Bible [John 17:17] and the promises we find within it, gives us the hope of eternal life, through the birth, life, death and resurrection of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Titus 1:4-5 [NIV] *"To Titus, my true son in our common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Saviour. The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you."*

The reason Paul sent Titus to Crete was to set in order any deficiencies in the organisation of the Church.

Crete had many towns and therefore many church groups, each needing good leadership.

There is no indication that Titus was a gifted speaker, but he was the man well qualified for practical administration.

Every church elder is always thankful when God provides people they can turn to whenever a practical job needs to be well done.

Paul had certain great titles by which he called Titus.

Titus 1:4 – child in the faith indicates that Titus was one of Paul's converts.

2 Corinthians 2:13 – refers to Titus as brother.

2 Corinthians 8:23 – partner and fellow worker.

2 Corinthians 12:18 – walked in the same Spirit [Holy Spirit].

Paul knew that Titus would deal with situations in the same way as he would.

Titus 2:7-8 [NIV] *"In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us."*

This was the greatest compliment that Paul paid Titus, he had sent Titus to Crete, not just to talk to them about what a Christian should be but to show them what a Christian should be.

There is no greater responsibility and no higher compliment than to be told this.

One very interesting suggestion has been made about Titus in **2 Corinthians 8:18** [NIV]. It talks about Titus being sent with another brother "whose praise is in all the Churches" also in **2 Corinthians 12:18** this brother is also mentioned being with Titus.

This brother is commonly identified as Luke, and it has been suggested that Titus was Luke's brother.

It is rather an odd fact that Titus is never mentioned by name in Acts, which we know is written by Luke. Also often Luke tells the story in the first person plural, saying "we did this" or "we did that" and it has been suggested that in such passages Luke includes Titus with himself.

[Acts 5:32; Acts 10:39; Acts 10:47; Acts 14:15]

Whether this suggestion is true we cannot be sure, but certainly Titus and Luke have a family resemblance in that they are both men of practical service.

Titus 1:5-6 [NIV] *"The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you. An elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient."*

Crete had a large population of Jews. The churches there were most likely founded by Cretan Jews who had been in Jerusalem at Pentecost more than 30 years before Paul wrote this letter. **[Acts 2:11]**

The qualifications of an elder as they are set out in **1 Timothy 3:1-7** are repeated with the addition of the condition that his children must be "believers."

Christianity begins at home.

It is **no** virtue for any man or woman to be so engaged in work within the church fellowship that he or she neglects their own family.

All the church service in the world will **not** atone for neglect in your own family.

The New Testament uses two words for leaders in a church fellowship.

Elder – the Greek word "prēsbutērōs" meaning older or senior, referring to age or experience.

Eldership is the most ancient of all offices within God's people.

The Jews had elders and traced the origin back to Moses where rebuke, discipline and settlement of disputes and arguments were settled by elders.

[For extended study download our article 'Ancient Israel's Legal System' under sub-heading 'Judgement']

Every Jewish synagogue had its elders who were the real leaders in each community.

The Jewish elders were the respected men who administered a fatherly oversight over the spiritual and material affairs of every Jewish community.

The newly-formed Christian fellowships took on much of this method of leadership.

Overseer – Bishop or Superintendent –

The Greek word is "ēpiskōpē" which literally means inspection or visitation.

Modern scholarship is practically unanimous that elder, bishop or overseer were one and the same person.

Elders described these leaders of the Church as they personally were, older, respected, experienced members of a fellowship.

Bishop or overseer describes their function or task, which was to oversee and superintend the life and work of the Church fellowship.

One word describes the man and his character, the other word describes the function, work and responsibility that the man has.

The Appointment of Elders/Overseers –

These men were officially and formally set apart for their office, qualified by the Holy Spirit giving evidence of His work within their lives.

Literally a man was doing the work of an elder before he was officially appointed as elder. [1 **Timothy 3:10**]

The elder is supported by the fellowship that chose him to be their leader. [1 **Timothy 5:17-18**]

Elders are liable to censure, they are leaders and directors of the fellowship, but also their servant. No Christian office-bearer must ever think they are **not** answerable to the people that God has given to them to serve. [1 **Timothy 5:19-22**]

Titus 1:9 [NIV] *“He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.”*

The elder must be one who is well versed in doctrine and able to give clear teaching. [1 **Peter 3:15-16**]

1 Timothy 3:6-7 [NIV] *“He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil’s trap.”*

Elders should **not** be recent converts, two reasons are given, both are linked to pride. An inflated sense of his own importance that was Satan’s downfall. [**Ezekiel 28:11-17**]

1 Timothy 3:4-5 [NIV] *“He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God’s church?)”*

An elder’s testing sphere of duty is how he manages his own home. A man who has **not** succeeded in making a Christian home could hardly be expected to succeed in making a Christian fellowship.

1 Timothy 3:7 [NIV] *“He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil’s trap.”*

Nothing has hurt the Christian Church more than the sight of people active in a Christian fellowship whose business and social life belies the faith that they profess and the precepts they teach.

I have used the parallel reference to the qualities and duties of elders in Paul’s letter to Timothy as it is more comprehensible.

Titus 1:8-9 [NIV] *“Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.”*

Here are listed words referring to qualities that an elder must have that may need explaining.

Hospitable – Greek word “*philōxēnōs*” which means literally “*lover of strangers.*”

In the ancient world inns were notoriously expensive, dirty and immoral. It was essential that a Christian traveller should find an open door within the homes of the Christian community.

Lover of what is good – Greek word “*philagathōs*” meaning a promoter of virtue and lover of good people. An elder must have a heart that responds to what is virtuous in whatever person, place or action he finds.

Self-Controlled – Greek word “*sōphrōn*” denoting a sound mind that controls every instinct and passion.

Upright – Greek word “*dikaios*” a person who fulfils their duties towards God and other human beings. Respect to other human beings and reverence to the Creator God.

Holy – Greek word “*hosios*” meaning pure from evil conduct and observant of God’s Will.

Disciplined – Greek word “*ēgkratēs*” describes a person who has achieved complete self-mastery. Any person who would serve others must be master of themselves.

Encourage – Greek word “*parakalēō*” literally to call near to comfort, invoke and exhort.

To be able to urge another person to pursue some course of conduct.

The function of the true Christian teacher is **not** to drive a person to despair, but to lift them up to hope.

Refute – Greek word “*ēlēgehō*” meaning to admonish or convict a person in such a way that they are compelled to see and admit the error of their ways.

To unanswerably demonstrate the truth of what has been said.

Titus 1:10-11 [NIV] “*For there are many rebellious people, mere talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision group. They must be silenced, because they are ruining whole households by teaching things they ought not to teach, and that for the sake of dishonest gain.*”

The “*circumcision group*” were the Judaisers, Jews who taught that Gentiles had to obey the Jewish laws before they could become Christians.

Instead of leading people to the truth they were leading them away from the true gospel message.

The peril of these false teachers was that they were seeking to persuade people that they needed more than faith in Jesus Christ and more than God’s grace in order to be saved.

Rebellious – Greek word “*aunpōtaktōs*” meaning insubordinate, **not** subject to rule.

Mere Talkers – Greek word “*mataiōs*” meaning empty and profitless. That which was **not** producing any good in life. This was an adjective which was applied to all heathen worship.

People who were speaking their misguided opinions without checking them against the Christian Bible.

Deceivers – Greek word “*phrēnapatēs*” meaning to mind-misleader or seducer.

This false teaching was upsetting and for personal gain. These people were more interested in what they could get out of others **not** what they could give others in love and service.

Titus 1:12-13 [NIV] “*Even one of their own prophets has said, ‘Cretans are always liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons.’ This testimony is true. Therefore, rebuke them sharply, so that they will be sound in the faith*”

What Paul was saying was a quotation of a Cretan philosopher Epimenides who wrote it about 600 BC.

No people ever had a worse reputation in the ancient world than the Cretans.

What is wonderful thing that Paul known this by personal experience did **not** tell the Christians in Crete to avoid these people but to go and convert them to the truth.

Titus 1:14 [NIV] *“and will pay no attention to Jewish myths or to the commands of those who reject the truth.”*

Jewish Myths – the great characteristic of the Jewish faith was its thousands of rules and regulations.

When Judaism and Gnosticism linked even the human body became unclean, marriage and the natural instincts of the body were seen to be evil.

It even became a sin to marry and to beget children.

This teaching is prompted by Satan and his hate of human beings, the result of his pride and jealousy.

Hebrews 1:5 [NIV] *“For to which of the angels did God ever say, ‘You are my Son; today I have become your Father’? Or again, ‘I will be his Father, and he will be my Son’?”*

Angels **not** offered sonship of God.

Mark 12:25 [NIV] *“When the dead rise, they will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven.”*

Angels can never experience the blessing of marriage.

1 Corinthians 6:3 [NIV] *“Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life!”*

Christians as created children of God will be given the task of judging angels.

Titus 1:15 [NIV] *“To the pure, all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure. In fact, both their minds and consciences are corrupted.”*

Paul strikes at the heart of the matter using the great principle that he also had expanded on in his letter to the Christians at Rome. [**Romans 14:19-23**]

Jesus Christ mentions the same principle in **Mark 7:14-22** in context of Jewish traditions.

It is a person’s inner mind and heart which makes all the difference to that person.

If a person is pure in their motivations and thinking, then all their outward actions are pure.

A person with a dirty mind makes all things dirty.

A person’s decisions and actions are the result of using two faculties they are blessed with.

Intellect [**Job 32:8**] – the God-given ability to think things out.

Conscience – the God-given ability to listen to the voice of God or to ignore it.

Titus 1:16 [NIV] *“They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny him. They are detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing anything good.”*

When a person drifts into a state of impurity, they may know God intellectually, but their lives deny this knowledge.

How the Creator God sees them is expounded in three words.

Detestable – Greek word “*bdēluktōs*” meaning idolatrous, used of the image set up by the antichrist. [Matthew 24:15; Mark 13:14]

An image that is highly esteemed by humans but in total contrast to what is esteemed by the Creator God. [Luke 16:13-15]

Revelation 21:27 [NIV] “*Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life.*”

Entrance to the holy city of God will be forbidden to such people.

Revelation 17:3-6 [NIV] “*Then the angel carried me away in the Spirit into a desert. There I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was covered with blasphemous names and had seven heads and ten horns. The woman was dressed in purple and scarlet, and was glittering with gold, precious stones and pearls. She held a golden cup in her hand, filled with abominable things and the filth of her adulteries. This title was written on her forehead: MYSTERY BABYLON THE GREAT THE MOTHER OF PROSTITUTES AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. I saw that the woman was drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of those who bore testimony to Jesus. When I saw her, I was greatly astonished.*”

The evil woman who is to persecute Christians just prior to Christ’s return, has her cup full of such abominations.

Disobedient – Greek word “*apēithēs*” meaning unpersuadable.

Such a person cannot obey God for their conscience is dead [1 Timothy 4:1-2], needs cleansing [Hebrews 10:22]. They have made themselves unable to hear the voice of God, let alone obey it.

They are unfit for any good task, unable to be anything other than an evil soiling influence.

Unfit – Greek word “*adōkimōs*” meaning unapproved, rejected, cast away, worthless.

The word was used to describe a counterfeit coin, a cowardly soldier who fails in the testing hour of battle, a rejected candidate for an office.

A stone that had a flaw in it and was rejected by builders.

The ultimate test of any human life is usefulness.

A life whose influence is constantly toward that which is unclean, is of **no** use to God and of **no** use to their fellow human beings.

Instead of helping God’s work in the world, they hinder it.

Such uselessness always invites disaster in the end.